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eNews from Sen. Lisa Murkowski - October 18, 2007 - Vol. 3, Issue 14

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Celebrating Alaska Day

I would like to wish you happy Alaska Day. Alaska Day is the anniversary of the formal transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States, which took place at the raising of the U.S. Flag at Sitka, Alaska on October 18, 1867.

When Abraham Lincoln was President, his Secretary of State William Henry Seward negotiated a deal to buy Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million—or 2 cents an acre. The purchase agreement was approved by the U.S. Senate on May 27, 1867. After President Andrew Johnson signed the final treaty, the transfer was made on October 18, 1867.

Initially, Americans were less than enthusiastic about the purchase of Alaska. Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune wrote that Alaska was a “frozen wilderness” that “contained nothing of value but furbearing animals,” and which “would not be worth taking as a gift.”

It was soon discovered, however, that Alaska was not a frozen wilderness, but a lush, resource-rich and stunningly beautiful land. Gold was discovered in the 1890's and oil about 75 years later. Today, Alaska continues to provide natural resources to the United States, and it remains a pristine land of great beauty for visitors from across the world to enjoy.



A view of Lynn Canal aboard the M/V Fairweather.

Murkowski Celebrates the Return of the Alaska National Guard

Yesterday, Congressman Young and I traveled to Camp Shelby in Mississippi to attend a ceremony dedicating the return of the 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry of the Alaska Army National Guard. The guardsmen have been successfully serving as security forces in northern Kuwait and Southern Iraq since October 2006, guarding camps and convoys heading into Iraq. This was the largest call-up of members of the Alaska National Guard since World War II.

I am so proud of these troops who represent 80 different communities across the State. They performed magnificently and their service will long be remembered. I wish them safe travel as they begin returning home to Alaska.



Senator Murkowski with Specialist Raymond Mixsooke from Unalakleet.

Murkowski Travels to Southeast Alaska

Last week I spent the Senate recess traveling throughout Southeast Alaska. I met with fishermen, visited schools, and held public meet and greet receptions in Wrangell, Petersburg, Ketchikan, Craig, Klawock, and Metlakatla.

My meetings with fisherman gave me chance to update them on federal fisheries issues and to hear their concerns on federal legislation that could impact their livelihoods. I will continue to work with the industry to address their priority issues. I also met with students in many of the communities and got a chance to tell them about what is going on in Washington, D.C., as well as to answer questions they had. As always is the case with students in Alaska, I received excellent questions about federal legislation, policies and my perspective. It was great to hear from our young people. Finally, I had the opportunity to meet with community leaders to hear what the important issues and priorities are in each community. I appreciated the opportunity to check on the progress of many federal projects and to determine what Southeast Alaska's current needs are.



Senator Murkowski answers questions at a meeting with the students of Craig High School.

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Murkowski Announces Major Grant for Geothermal Energy Production

On Monday I was pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of Energy has awarded a major grant to Chena Power, a subsidiary of Chena Hot Springs Resort located outside of Fairbanks, to prove the feasibility of generating alternative electricity from the hot water separated from fossil fuels during production at oil and gas wells.

The grant could have major implications for geothermal energy development nationwide since there are thousands of working oil and gas wells in America in a dozen states that generate enough geothermal water to possibly produce 5,000 megawatts of clean, renewable energy to add to the nation's electricity portfolio.

This is an important project for Alaska since Alaska's oil fields on the North Slope and Cook Inlet produce more than 1.2 million barrels of water each day. This is water that is often below the boiling point, but hot enough to produce geothermal electricity utilizing the new technology being pioneered at Chena Hot Springs. Using the water that today is just a waste product of oil and gas production can save energy in fossil fuel production and could add clean electricity to our nation's power grid. It is an important project for the nation and the state.



Senator Murkowski announces the geothermal grant at the Anchorage Chamber luncheon.

Senator Murkowski Encourages Alaskans to Participate in Red Ribbon Week

Drug use—especially meth—is out of control in Alaska. A 2004-2005 survey found that approximately 13% of Alaska's 12-17 year-olds used an illicit drug in the previous month. This rate is among the highest in the nation. According to a 2005 Anchorage School District study, 34.8% of boys and 30% of girls were offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property within the past year, and 7.8% of 9th-12th graders had used meth.

Every year, from October 23rd through the 31st, Americans across the country celebrate Red Ribbon Week, a commemoration of the life of Special Agent Enrique Camarena of the Drug Enforcement Administration, who was murdered in the line of duty in 1985. Red Ribbon Week is dedicated to memorializing Agent Camarena, and all those who have lost their lives in the war on drugs, by educating youth about the dangers of drug abuse, promoting drug-free activities, and celebrating those who have stood strong against drugs. By gathering together in special events and wearing a red ribbon during Red Ribbon Week, Americans from all walks of life demonstrate their commitment to help people, especially children, make the right life-decisions.

In Alaska, Red Ribbon Week is a statewide celebration involving thousands of school children and other supporters. On October 22, the Municipality of Anchorage, in conjunction with the Alaska Red Ribbon Coalition and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Alaska, will host a Red Ribbon Week kickoff at Sand Lake Elementary School. The Coalition is comprised of the Anchorage School District, the Alaska State Troopers, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

In addition, the Alaska National Guard and the forty-three Boys & Girls Clubs across the state will help other Alaskan communities celebrate Red Ribbon Week. I encourage

all Alaskans to take part in the Red Ribbon Week events taking place throughout Alaska. Working together we can achieve our common goal of eradicating drug addiction in our state.



Senator Murkowski with Kai Hibbard, who lost 118 pounds and was the runner-up on the reality show Biggest Loser.

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